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BEHEMOTH

• Loch Ness: * 27 June 1937 - a woman spots "something" in the loch off Torness (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * February 1997 - A family sees "an object travelling quickly through the water" at Foyers. (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * Just before White's sighting, a South African couple saw two humps off Abriachan. (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * 21 March 1997 - Richard White, while travelling to Foyers at 11.30am, noticed a disturbance halfway across the loch to Urquhart Castle and snapped 10 pictures in quick succession. When he ran out of film, the monster surfaced and showed several humps before diving again. There were additional witnesses to this event. (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998 and 3 March 1998; Glasgow Herald, 3 March 1998) * April 1997 - A visitor from Skye reported a sighting near Foyers (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * June 1997 - One morning, "a dark object" moved swiftly across the loch a mile south of Urquhart Castle (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * July 1997 - "two sonar contacts with objects in the depths of the loch" (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * August 1997 - a camper near Invermoriston reported "a strange incident" at 3am. No further details. (Inverness Courier 23 January 1998) * According to Gary Campbell of the ludicrously named "Official Loch Ness Monster Fan Club" reported there had been 11 sightings in 1997 (Inverness Courier, 3 March 1998) -- All reports taken from Andreas Trottman's "Loch Ness Newscipping Service", vol. 4, No. 1. From the short descriptions given by Campbell, it is hard to see whether anything unusual was observed at all.

• Bibliography: * English naturalist Redmond O'Henlon, with an American colleague and a Congolese guide, travelled the Congo in search of Mokele mbembe. His book was published in Britain in 1996 under the title "Congo Journey", and in German in 1998 as "Kongofieber" by Eichborn, Frankfurt am Main. I haven't seen a copy, but from the review it appears to be more a description of Congolese politics than a pure cryptozoology book. Sounds good. (636 p., 49,80 DM; review in: taz, 14 March 1998, Magazine section, p. v) * The Roraima mountain range in Brasil is famous for Cierro Neblina, a table mountain where an Englishman has been seeing tiny dinosaurs for years. Now all papers were full of the sad news of large forest fires in the Brasil state of Roraima, but it appears as if the fires were well to the south of the dinosaur mountain. The region is identical to the area where Marcel Homet searched for Atlantean ruins in the 1950s, in contrast to his time, the area is now well settled. (Süddeutsche Zeitung 14 March 1998, p. 16; 1 April 1998, p. 16) In a ritual, Yanomami chief Davi Kopenawa Yanomami called a spirit to put the fire out, and rain followed. (Bild 2 April 1998, p. 6) * A large python swalled a two month-old toddler on the Philippine island of Luzon. A mother heard the baby cry, and when she investigated, she found the cradle empty. A gigantic python just left the room and vanished in the nearby jungle. Only a few months ago, a 32-year-old hunter had been swallowed by a python on a neighboring island. The snake was killed, and his body found inside. (Bild 8 April 1998, p. 10) * Nessie conspiracy by tourist officials (Fortean Times 108, p. 61) * 20 ft eel in a Birmingham, UK, canal (Fortean Times 107, p. 15) * slug-like giant creature crosses moors in Pennines, UK (Fortean Times 107, p. 41)

ISIS

• In Easter Island folklore, Tangaroa, one of their kings, came across the sea to the island. While his brother Hiro had a coat of feathers, Tangaroa used to wear the skin of a tunny, a turtle's shell or a seal's skin. One day, while both brothers walked along a beach, Tangaroa decided to jump into the sea and swim to an

island where he would be king. He first turned into a tunny, then into a turtle, and into a seal. So he came ashore Easter Island where he was found: "Many people assembled at the beach ... and shouted: 'There is a seal on the shore at Ahu Tonga Riki. He has the body and the tail of a seal but the head and the hands of a man.' So they towed the seal ashore to kill him. And the seal shouted: 'Don't kill me. I am no seal. I am King Tangaroa.'" Well, the islanders killed him nevertheless but all attempts to cook him failed, and finally they realised it had actually been a King.

(Fritz Felbermayer: Sagen und Überlieferungen der Osterinsel. Nuremberg: Hans Carl 1971, p. 48) It is very interesting to find a myth resembling the selkie belief on the other side of the globe.

● Bibliography : * mermaid sighted in Pennine moors, UK (Fortean Times 107, p. 39) * Copenhagen mermaid beheading (Fortean Times 109, p. 15) * four tiny mummies washed ashore at a Java beach in 1972 (Fortean Times 107, p. 8) * Fish Boy of Naples (Fortean Times 108, p. 29) * L. Coleman identifies a "werwolf" seen in Wisconsin in 1936 as a hominid of the same species as the Lizard Man or the Thetis Lake, BC, fish-man, because it had 3 claws (Fortean Times 108, p. 47) Coleman has now identified three species of ape in the US (Bigfoot, aquatic chimpanzee in southern swamps, and the three-toed ape) - it would help if at least one of them could be found.

LEVIATHAN

● Nathan Bailey's "Universal Etymological English Dictionary" (London 1721) contains the following entry: "Unicorn Whale - A fish eighteen feet long, having a head like a horse and scales as big as a crown piece, six large fins like the end of a galley oar, and a horn issuing out of the forehead nine feet long, so sharpe as to pierce the largest bodies". (see Odell Shepard: The Lore of the Unicorn. London: George Allen & Unwin 1930, p. 257) This is not just a curious bit of uninformed description: it shows that, although dead narwhales were quite known at the time, in describing them recourse was taken to traditional imagery. The narwhale was thought to be a fish, so it had scales, it was thought of as unicorn, so it had a horse's head. How good Heuvelmans' did not find this report when he wrote his monumental sea serpent book, or he must have decided that the merhorse and the many finned sea serpent can cross-breed and produce offspring. The entry also shows that the many finned sea serpent with the oar-like fins is a traditional beast, not a zoological entity. It was first described by classical writers, and later scholars (as the quote shows) were not above adding the traditional rows of fins to whales who evidently don't have them. This can easily explain the descriptions of whales with rows of fins that Heuvelmans (for example, on p. 242) uses to establish a pedigree for his silly many-finned sea serpent. Marine animals, even if they looked completely different, were described with a horse's head - this certainly must be taken into account with old depictions of sea serpents. See "Fortean Studies" 3 for more examples of Heuvelmansian madness.

● Bibliography: * "Extinct" whales rediscovered (Rheinpfalz, 17. January 1998) * Tasmanian sea monster (Fortean Times 109, p. 21) * giant penguin hoax, Florida, 1948 (Fortean Times 109, p. 42) * Oarfish in England. 37 reports listed by John Hedley in Fortean Times 108, p. 53, including strandings in 1759, 1849 and 1981. As an expert for sea serpents, Hedley wonders what the monster washed up in Scotland in 1808 was and thinks it was an "old chesnut". Well, it is the Stronsa, Orkney, basking shark, and I wonder how some people do research * The giant conger eel caught at Schotland, NL (Fortean Times 108, p. 52)

KRAKEN

● Strange miniature squids in toxic waste, USA (Fortean Times 108, p. 19; this was also in Strange, see some previous Bilk)

USO

● Sphere: This movie is now in German theatres, directed by Barry Levinson and written by Michael Crichton. The story combines UFOs,

USOs and the plot of "Forbidden Planet": a flying saucer, discovered at the ocean floor, is not extraterrestrial, but comes from our own future, and it reflects and materialises our fears and anxieties. Even "gigantic conger eels" play a role. Judging from the reviews I have read so far, the movie is boring. Check out for yourself. (taz, 2 April 1998, p. 18; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 3 April 1998, p. 46)

● Brief bits: * Ron Halliday, of Scottish Earth Mysteries Research, claims that it was a USO, not an iceberg, which sunk the Titanic. (The Ley Hunter # 130, p. 21) * Patagonia: Antonio Rivera and Mirta Vicente want to raise and restore a Nazi submarine that has repeatedly been spotted in Golfo de San Matias, Rio Negro province, Argentina, according to their letter in "La Manana del Sur" newspaper. The German submarine was observed during extremely low tides in 1959, 1962 and 1966. According to tradition, it had served Nazi officers to flee to Argentina after World War II. (Süddeutsche Zeitung 1 April 1998, p. 16)

WHALES

● Deaths: 20 dead dolphins were washed ashore at the French Mediterranean coast around Perpignan in February 1998. (Bild 21 February 1998, p. 1) Now conspiracy enters: according to Bild (26 February 1998, p. 12; and I've heard it on the radio too) 22 dead dolphins were found, and marine zoologists who examined the carcasses found that 15 of them had a hole in their throat with a diameter of roughly 10 cm. Monica Müller, a German scientist who was with the investigators noted that these holes were always at the same location, and an unnamed US expert thought the American Navy was to blame: "The Navy trains dolphins as a sort of 'swimming weapon'. The animals learn to explode mines below ships. They wear special ribbons around their throat, which, after the explosion, tear holes into their throat". Now, there is no end to what military types will do to animals and humans in their perverse urges, yet I think if something like explosives were tested, the US Navy - especially knowing the sentimentality people feel towards dolphins - would undertake such tests secretly and then dispose the cadavres. We'd need more information and I regret I haven't found anything about the case in the quality papers. Most whale lovers like to mystify the tragedies their favorite animals live through and look for culprits which usually are the bad, bad people. (Before you get something wrong - I am a militant vegetarian myself, but seeing how those blue eyed idealists have no problems with the mass killings of sharks but make super-humans of dolphins is annoying) We've had the usual fare of mass strandings of whales again, and, because whale is better than man, many ecology people blame pollution, or noise by ships, or, indeed, the Navy for causing them. My favorite newspaper "taz" (magazine section, 14 February 1998, p. iv) had a fine article on these mass strandings and points out that there are various theories to account for them and also that we just don't know why they beach. Also, mass strandings of sperm whales along the North Sea shore have always happened, so there is no need for Greenpeace (heroes that they are!) to use them for anti-industry propaganda. The article, by Irene Meichsner, has interesting infos on an additional recent and older cases: in November 1997, a dead fin whale was found off the Spanish north coast with one ctw. ball composed of plastic bags in his/her stomach. In February 1598, a sperm whale stranded at the Dutch coast between Katwijk and Scheveningen. A contemporary broadsheet describes the whale as evidence for Gods power and notes that its tongue "was as big as a cask of beer". Its eye was very large, and the whole animal 16m long, "four metres alone from its arsehole to its tail fluke" as the sheet printed by Henrick Haestens of Amsterdam notes in no uncertain terms. Its penis was 2m long and its voice so loud it could be heard from half a mile's away. German chronicler Hans Sibmacher adds that it died "with such a detonation as if a cannon had fired a shot" and water ran in streams

from its neck (sic!) "but it stank so much that nobody wanted to stay beside it". The article also mentions Richar Ellis' book on sea monsters. That whales beach by themselves and return to land even though they will die there after friendly people have towed them back to sea doesn't justify idiots in Japan and Norway to go on killing these creatures, so support Greenpeace!

- Rescue: A grey whale cow raised in a zoo after she had stranded 14 months previously near San Diego, California, was brought back to the sea on a large lorry - the cow itself was 10m long and 9 tons in weight! (Bild 2 April 1998, p. 12) However, JJ, as the whale was nicknamed, was used to confinement, and only swam up and down a stretch of coast without following a passing shoal of whales, as biologists had hoped. Pal Yochem, a marine scientist, feared she could be killed by orcas who accompany the shoal and feed on weak whales. (Bild 8 April 1998, p. 10) * Nikki Brice, an 8-year-old British boy, had suffered a lack of oxygen during birth and had never talked. As therapy, he was sent swimming in a basin with dolphins, and soon afterwards uttered his first words! (Süd-deutsche Zeitung 28 March 1998, p. 16)

MARINE MYSTERIES

- The Deluge Again: According to two American scientists, William Ryan and Walter Pitman of Lamont-Doherty Observatory at Palisades, New York, the real, historical Deluge took place in the Black Sea. When the glaciers melted 10,000 years ago, waters flooded the Mediterranean Sea, which one day was full. Water overflowed the Bosphorus and created what is now the Black Sea. Water levels rose 15 cm each day, forcing the inhabitants to leave the land and move to higher regions. This traumatic experience was later told as the Deluge. The refugees settled all Europe, including the Rhine region, and brought farming techniques with them. (Bild 2 March 1998, p. 12) I think I have read about this theory before, and it is only one of several "scientific" deluge explanations.

- The ghost ship: Antonio Marciano, 36, from Sorrent was on a freighter to New York. From Belgium, he phoned his family and told them to come and help him as "strange things happen here". When the ship arrived at Anvers, there was no trace of Marciano on board. The German tabloid "Bild" (31 March 1998, p. 5) turns that into a ghost story, but wouldn't it be more sane to assume Marciano (which, by the way, translates as "Martian") noticed some criminal offence by the ship (transport of toxics, for example)?

- Homo erectus on Flores: Finds made in 1994 of 14 artifacts dated to 750 000 BP by scientists show that Homo erectus was there. The big problem is that at the time, Flores was not on a continent, and Homo erectus would have to cross at least 20 miles of sea, possibly more. So, two stages before modern man, people must have been able to build boats or rafts! Or maybe they were excellent swimmers? (Nature 392: 173; Science 279: 1635; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 1 April 1998)

- Mixed material: * expedition for an "Atlantis" off Cornwall (Fortean Times 108, p. 7)

CRYPTOZOLOGY

- The biped ape: This sensational fossil discovery is described in great detail in "GEO" 11/97, p. 98 and "Spiegel" 13/1998, p. 206/207. Palaeontologists have found the remains of a biped ape which died out 10 million years ago and is completely unrelated to man - this is a candidate never before considered for manimals.

- Geo 3/1998, p. 168 has an article on animal discoveries at Vietnam.

- All my cryptozoological readers triumphed last year and called me cynic because they knew that the orang pendek, the yeti of Indonesia, had just been discovered by British zoologists. Haven't heard much of that since. Does anyone know more.

Remember I want and need your feedback. I hope you liked this issue of Bilk. See you again in July.